

NCLIS Press Release

**U. S. National Commission on
Libraries and Information Science**

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For Immediate Release

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NCLIS Agenda: Assessment, Relevance, and Research National Commission Selects Strategic Goals

Washington, DC USA, July 6, 2004 – The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) has announced three strategic goals to guide its work in the immediate future:

- Appraising and assessing library and information services provided for the American people
- Strengthening the relevance of libraries and information science in the lives of the American people
- Promoting research and development for extending and improving library and information services for the American people

Beth Fitzsimmons, NCLIS Chair, noted that in the legislation that created the Commission, Congress included a Statement of Policy that affirmed that “library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals” and that “the Federal Government will cooperate with State and local governments and public and private agencies in assuring optimum provision of such services.”

“It was that Congressional statement that guided us in our decision,” said Fitzsimmons, of Ann Arbor, MI. “The mandate to the Commissioners couldn’t be clearer, and we thought long and hard about how we could best work with the American library and information community to ensure that services are adequate. Targeting these goals will position NCLIS for doing its best work, we think.”

Twelve of the Commissioners (of a total of 16) were appointed by President George W. Bush in the autumn of last year and confirmed by the Senate in January.

“Since many of us were just recently appointed,” Fitzsimmons continued, “we’ve been given a rare opportunity to put our collective energies to work for America’s libraries.”

This 'new' NCLIS – as we like to think of ourselves – is committed to learning just how good our country's libraries are, and how we can participate in making them better. At the same time, we know that in this age of the internet, of digitization, and of many other sources for information, there is a real need to strengthen libraries, to ensure that they are understood as being relevant in people's lives. Finally, of course, we must have more research and development work in the whole field of library and information science, and NCLIS is committed to supporting that."

NCLIS members have identified eight strategic subject areas in which the Commission expects to be active, and each of these is being given attention by a task force composed of volunteer Commissioners:

- Appraisal/Assessment/Statistics (Commissioner Jose Aponte, Colorado Springs, CO, Task Force Leader)
- Digitization (Commissioner Allison Druin, College Park, MD, Task Force Leader)
- Economic Development/Job Creation (Commissioner Bridget Lamont, Springfield, IL, Task Force Leader)
- Educational Achievement (Commissioner Allison Druin, College Park, MD, Task Force Leader)
- Emergency Preparedness (Commissioner Stephen Kennedy, Dunbarton, NH, Task Force Leader)
- Joint NCLIS/ICSECA Activities (Commissioner Joan Challinor, Washington, DC, Task Force Leader)
- Libraries and Consumer Health Information (Commissioner Mary (Mitzi) Perdue, Salisbury, MD, Task Force Leader)
- Universal Services Section (Section 245) Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Commissioner Fitzsimmons, Ann Arbor, MI, Task Force Leader)

By carrying out activities in these areas, both through its own efforts and by working with the many strategic partners the Commissioners have identified, NCLIS expects to be able to gather the information it requires to recommend policy to the President and to Congress. In doing so, the Commission will provide guidance to the American library and information science community and fulfill its own Congressional mandate of addressing the information and learning needs of the American people.

About NCLIS

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is a permanent, independent agency of the Federal government charged by Public Law 91-345 to advise the President and Congress on national and international library and information policies, to appraise and assess the adequacies and deficiencies of library and information resources and services, and to develop overall plans for meeting national library and information needs. Broadly speaking, NCLIS is responsible for addressing the information and learning needs of the American people.